DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 451 CS 504 374

AUTHOR Stano, Michael
TITLE Guidelines for the Interviewee in the Performance Appraisal Interview.
PUB DATE May 83
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (Dallas, TX, May 26-30, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Science Research; Behavior Patterns; *Behavior Standards; *Communication Research; Employer Employee Relationship; *Employment Interviews; *Evaluation Criteria; Interpersonal Communication; *Job Skills; Performance Factors; *Personnel Evaluation; Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Performance Appraisal

ABSTRACT

To describe those behaviors leading to productive appraisal interviews of sales representatives, questionnaires were administered to 27 branch sales managers who supervised 160 sales representatives. Eleven managers received a preliminary questionnaire asking them to cite behaviors of the sales representatives that caused productive or unproductive appraisal sessions. These were then sorted according to theme, creating a comprehensive list of 29 manager expectations for the behavior of subordinates in appraisal interviews. The remaining 16 managers completed the second questionnaire requiring them to judge the quality of the appraisal session in which they had just participated by evaluating each of the 29 behaviors. The subsequent analysis isolated specific behaviors as outstanding contributors to good interviews. The results indicated the need for interviewees to exude a mature, positive, and hopeful attitude during the evaluation, remain confident in their ability to do the job, and express a genuine desire to learn and improve. In addition, findings indicated that employees need to actively seek the experience and knowledge of their supervisor. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED234451

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE IN THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Michael Stano

109 Morrill Hall
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
phone: 405-624-6150

Michael Stano is an Associate Professor of Speech Communication at Oklahoma State University. He received his B.A. in Political Science from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1969, his M.A. in Communication from the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1970, and his Ph.D. in Speech Communication from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, in 1977.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Michael Stano
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Running Head: PAIV

CS 504374

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE IN THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Abstract

Most of the previous research on the performance appraisal interview is devoted to generating guidelines for the interviewer. This paper argues that if appraisal discussions are to be productive, interviewees must be provided with their own set of behavioral guides. A two-part study is described which delineates suggestions for employees involved in performance appraisal interviews.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE IN THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Much has been written concerning the complex, multi-dimensional process of performance appraisal interviewing. Despite the wealth of material available, it is difficult to locate solid, explicit guidelines for the interviewee's behavior in appraisal discussions. Most of the appraisal literature is written for the manager and instructions are not, as a rule, directed at employees (Crawford, 1974, pp. 50-51; Greller, 1975). It is true that management literature often has implications for subordinate behavior, but directions developed exclusively for subordinates are needed if employees are to be afforded the opportunity to play an informed and active part in influencing the quality of the exchange.

This paper seeks to recognize the interactive nature of communication in evaluative situations by providing interviewees with a specialized set of interview guidelines. A paradigm for productive appraisal interviewee behavior is generated for sales representatives employed by a large U.S.-based organization.

Subjects

The goal of this investigation was to describe the behaviors of sales representatives which lead to productive appraisal interviews. To uncover these behaviors, 27 branch sales managers were polled. These managers supervise 160 sales representatives all of whom sell comparable products for the same division of the organization.

Method

Since the branch sales managers and sales representatives employed by this organization are grouped into regional offices dispersed throughout the United States, a mailed questionnaire procedure was dictated. Sales managers were chosen at random to receive either a preliminary qualitative questionnaire or a follow-up quantitative questionnaire.

Preliminary Qualitative Questionnaire

Eleven managers supervising 47 sales representatives participated in this segment of the study. A short time before the regularly scheduled quarterly performance reviews, each manager was contacted via an interoffice memo from the National Sales Manager. The memo described the research project, urged managers to participate, and stressed the confidentiality of all responses. Approximately two weeks later, a packet of materials from the researcher was distributed to each supervisor. The packet included a cover letter, a list of instructions, a set of questionnaires, and stamped return envelopes. The cover letter briefly described

the goal of the investigation, highlighted the National Sales Director's call for cooperation, and repeated the assurance of confidentiality. The instructions directed the manager to fill out and return a separate questionnaire immediately following each interview he/she conducted with a sales representative.

The questionnaire managers were asked to complete followed the critical incident format outlined by John Flanagan (1949a, pp. 39-53; 1949b; 1951; 1954; Flanagan & Burns, 1955). An important first step in building a critical incident questionnaire is the selection of a frame of reference for the respondent. In this investigation, subjects were provided with the catchwords "productive" and "unproductive." These key terms were selected because they subsume most of the desirable qualities of performance appraisal interviews. Managers were asked to cite behaviors performed by the sales representative which caused the session to be productive or unproductive.

To digest the information present on returned critical incident questionnaires, a variation of the techniques suggested by Flanagan (1949a, pp. 39-53; 1949b; 1951; 1954; Flanagan & Burns, 1955) was employed. The specific methodology used is detailed elsewhere (Stano, 1983); generally, the procedure involved a variety of sorters looking through all the critical incidents and placing them in common-theme piles. General summary statements were composed for each of these piles and what emerged was a comprehensive list of

manager expectations for the behavior of subordinates in appraisal interviews.

Flanagan and his followers would no doubt be content with the description of productive sessions provided by the critical incidents alone. It seemed reasonable, though, that some of the behaviors which surfaced might be more powerful determinants of productive interviews than others. To numerically assess the magnitude of the relationship between the various items which grew out of the critical incident process and positive interaction evaluations, a second set of questionnaires was constructed.

Follow-Up Quantitative Questionnaire

A larger number of subjects was reserved for this portion of the investigation because of the statistical analysis techniques which were planned. Sixteen branch sales managers were surveyed regarding the interview behavior of their 113 sales representatives.

As in the case of the qualitative questionnaire, each subject initially received a memo from the National Sales Director and then received a package from the researcher. With the exception of the questionnaires, these materials were identical to those used in the first phase of the study.

The questionnaires managers received required them to make a judgment about the quality of the appraisal session in which they had just participated. The evaluations were to comprise the foundation for the analysis which would allow specific behaviors to be isolated as outstanding

contributors to good interviews. The assessment was to be recorded on a six-point continuum bound by the terms "productive" and "unproductive." These endpoints were used for reasons specified earlier and six spaces were provided so as to force the decision to either the productive or unproductive side.

The remainder of the questionnaire was devoted to the analysis of those behaviors believed to be crucial to the success of performance appraisal interviews by individuals in the first part of this study. As noted earlier, content analysis of the preliminary qualitative questionnaire resulted in a list of statements regarding subordinate interview conduct developed by managers. On this quantitative set of questionnaires, subjects were confronted by these peer-made statements; subjects saw those statements the 11 supervisors who had participated in the critical incident phase had made concerning employee behavior in interviews.

After reading over the items in the list, the respondents were instructed to indicate the degree to which each comment accurately described the actual discussion behavior of the sales representative and to assess the general importance of the behavior as a contributor to session productivity. The notation of accuracy was to be used in conjunction with the productive/unproductive judgment to determine the magnitude of the correlation between the relative presence or absence of a behavior and the perceived level of interview quality. The estimation of importance

was requested to check the validity of the behaviors provided by the critical incident procedure; if the behaviors suggested by the first group of subjects were truly indicative of productive interviews, all items on this follow-up questionnaire should be viewed as high in importance.

Two seven-point scales ranging from "accurate" to "inaccurate" and from "important" to "unimportant" were provided for responses. Successive spaces on each scale were numbered starting with "1" on the accurate or important side and continuing to "7" on the inaccurate or unimportant side.

To systematically pick from the lists of critical incidents those interviewee behaviors which are most predictive of productive appraisal interviews, a oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a LSD aposteriori test (see Kim & Kohout, 1975, pp. 298-433) was performed for each item on the accurate/inaccurate dimension. The significance level established was .05. When the productive/unproductive judgment is defined as the independent variable and when the accurate/inaccurate score on each item is classified as the dependent variable, the ANOVA allows one to determine which behaviors differentiate between good and bad sessions.

The first step in applying the procedure is to separate all questionnaires on which the respondents indicated the interview was highly productive (the blank closest to the word "productive" was checked). An average score is figured for each question on these sheets using the corresponding

number of the space selected for an answer. Next, questionnaires on which the second highest blank on the productive/unproductive continuum was marked are examined and item averages are again computed. The same steps are followed for forms containing checks in the other four productive to unproductive spaces.

To determine if the mean score on a given item is substantially different for those who reported dissimilar session evaluations, an F test is then performed. If the resultant F ratio is significant, it indicates that as the accurate/inaccurate score for the specific behavior being studied varies so does the productive/unproductive judgment. When a profound relationship between the independent and dependent variables is found, the LSD test is applied to pinpoint exactly which means differ from one another. To illustrate, assume that on the item, "The sales representative willingly accepted suggestions," productive/unproductive column means of 1.2, 2.5, 3.7, 4.9, 5.6, and 6.9 are obtained. The F is significant as are the differences between each of the means. This pattern of averages suggests that in very productive interviews the descriptor of behavior is very accurate (the item average for the first column is low) and that in very unproductive interviews the descriptor of behavior is very inaccurate (the item average for the last column is high); as the willingness of the interviewee to accept suggestions incrementally increases, so does the likelihood that the manager will feel the discussion was

productive. Had the F been insignificant, this particular behavior from the original critical incident list would have been dismissed from consideration as a strong contributor to session productivity for the presence or absence of the behavior is statistically unrelated to quality judgments.

Using the one-to-seven scoring system, response frequency counts and arithmetic means were compiled for the answers to the important/unimportant portion of each question. Low averages would support the hypothesis that the critical incident questionnaires had generated behaviors characteristic of productive appraisal interviews.

Results

Preliminary Qualitative Questionnaire

An examination of postmarks made it possible to determine that all 11 managers returned at least one critical incident form. Of the 47 questionnaires mailed out, 42 were sent back and this amounts to an 89.4% response rate. The 29 distinct behavior categories which were isolated by the content analysis follow. When these behaviors are subsequently cited, they will appear in abbreviated form and the appropriate number will be provided.

1. The sales representative did not attempt to cover too much material in the time allotted for the interview.

2. The sales representative did not wander off the subject.

3. The sales representative asked me for help in handling his/her problems.

4. The sales representative asked questions about things he/she didn't understand.

5. The sales representative freely accepted responsibility for failing to meet his/her objectives.

6. The sales representative made suggestions that were aimed at improving office procedures.

7. The sales representative did not allow himself/herself to be distracted during the interview.

8. The sales representative has his/her materials well organized.

9. The sales representative seemed to be concerned with the good of the company.

10. The sales representative was cooperative in setting a time for the interview.

11. The sales representative seemed anxious to learn how to improve and become an even better salesperson.

12. The sales representative did not seem overly defensive when being criticized.

13. The sales representative spoke openly and candidly about all subjects.

14. The sales representative maintained a positive attitude about his/her ability to sell.

15. The sales representative played an active role in the interview and did a considerable amount of talking.

16. The sales representative came to the interview with a prepared list of new objectives.

17. The sales representative came to the interview

prepared with complete and accurate account books, statistics, and sales analyses.

18. The sales representative seemed willing to discuss his/her problems and ways to overcome them.

19. The sales representative tried to provide me with all the information I desired on all topics.

20. The sales representative seemed to be working hard to be a success in his/her job.

21. The sales representative willingly accepted suggestions.

22. The sales representative had self-analyzed his/her own problems and had developed methods of achieving his/her objectives.

23. The sales representative wanted to discuss specific account problems.

24. The sales representative seemed relaxed and at ease.

25. The sales representative seemed anxious to discuss salary considerations.

26. The sales representative seemed willing to accept company policy.

27. The sales representative conducted himself/herself in a mature manner.

28. The sales representative seemed willing to develop new sales possibilities.

29. The sales representative allotted an appropriate amount of time in which to conduct the interview.

Follow-Up Quantitative Questionnaire

Of the 16 manager subjects, 15 returned at least one questionnaire. In total, forms were received from 96 of the 113 interviews (85%). In the "importance" part of each of the 29 questions, managers were requested to indicate the importance of the item from the standpoint of its perceived contribution to productive interviews. Responses are summarized in Table 1 and examination of the figures makes it clear that most of the critical incidents were viewed as viable indicators of session quality. In all but three cases, the scores are radically skewed to the "important" side of the scale and averages are only slightly above or well below 2.00. The three exceptions, items 6 (makes suggestions for office procedures), 16 (prepares new objectives), and 25 (wants to discuss salary) generated averages of 3.62, 2.78, and 2.76 respectively; even in these instances the behavior was not totally rejected as trivial. Overall, these results testify to the validity of the initial critical incident procedure. The worth of the subordinate behaviors suggested by the first group of managers was upheld here and as a consequence it can be argued that the basis for the second quantitative questionnaire was a reasonable one. While it may be true that some important behaviors were not mentioned in the critical incident phase, it is now possible to contend that the managers in the follow-up rating stage were confronted by items of some significance.

Table 1 about here

Table 2 shows that managers regarded the interviews in which they had just participated as generally productive. Only three individuals rated the session below the median point on the scale and no one marked the number six blank which was closest to the word "unproductive." Due to the underutilization of the last three points on the continuum, answers were rescaled and later analysis distinguished between just three response categories: "1," "2," and "3 and below." In order, these categories shall be referred to as "highly productive," "moderately productive," and "slightly productive."

Table 2 about here

Table 3 displays the managers' answers to the "accuracy" part of the 29 questions which concerned the accuracy of a statement in view of the subordinate's actual behavior in the interview. On 26 items, managers recorded responses which hovered at the "accurate" end of the scale. Of the averages in this large cluster, five are close to 3.00 (2--sticks to the subject, 3--asks for help, 17--prepares account materials, 22--self-analyzes problems, 26--accepts company policy) but most are in the neighborhood of 2.00. This pattern is reversed on questions 6 (makes suggestions for office procedures), 16 (prepares new objectives), and 25 (wants to discuss salary) which all have averages greater than 4.00. This reversal is logical because, as noted previously, these behaviors are regarded as the most

unimportant ones in the set and behaviors which are borderline in importance should not be present in most interviews.

Table 3 about here

The statistics for the ANOVA which combined the productive/unproductive judgments with the accuracy scores are presented in Table 4. An analysis of items where a significant F ($p \leq .05$) was produced reveals the presence of six relationship patterns. The discussion of these six significant-F patterns immediately follows.

Table 4 about here

One group of statements which behave in a similar fashion consists of 11 (desires to learn), 21 (accepts suggestions), and 24 (seems relaxed). In this case, the mean item scores for those who rated the interview highly productive, moderately productive, and slightly productive are all significantly different from one another and the item averages increase steadily in magnitude as the quality rating of the interview decreases. In other words, as the descriptor of behavior becomes progressively less accurate, the overall evaluation of the session becomes progressively less favorable. Interviews in which representatives acted in a manner nearly consistent with the statement were judged to be highly productive; interviews in which the representative's actions were not quite as consistent with the statement were viewed as moderately productive; interviews

in which there was more divergence between the representative's behavior and the statement were seen as only slightly productive.

A second pattern includes 3 (asks for help), 5 (accepts responsibility for failures), 7 (prevents outside distractions), 9 (expresses concern for the company), 12 (avoids defensive reactions), 14 (maintained positive sales attitude), 15 (participates in the interview), 18 (wants to discuss problems), 19 (provides information), 22 (self-analyzes problems), 23 (wants to discuss specific accounts), 27 (behaves maturely), and 28 (seems willing to develop new sales). Here, too, there is an inverse linear relationship between item scores and interview evaluations but, while they both differ significantly from the slightly productive column mean, the highly and moderately productive means do not vary substantially from one another. Despite a trend which is comparable to the one present in the first classification of variables, conclusions in this instance are not as clear cut. If the behavior is viewed as being at the accurate end of the scale, the interview will receive either a highly or moderately productive rating but the exact nature of the rating cannot be predicted with certainty. The mere existence of the behavior does not guarantee a highly productive interview evaluation but it does guarantee a highly or moderately productive appraisal. Also, the significant difference between the item scores for those who marked the slightly productive blank and those who checked one of the

other two spaces makes it reasonably safe to contend that at some point the relative absence of the behavior will prompt a low quality assessment.

The third type of distinguishable relationship is represented only by 26 (accepts company policy) and it is a special case of the pattern just described. The highly and moderately productive averages are virtually the same and there is a break point at the slightly productive level. On this variable, though, the means are curvilinear rather than linear and the behavior is most visible in moderately productive interviews; in highly productive discussions, the behavior is not as detectable and in slightly productive sessions the behavior all but disappears. Since the data does not support a significant difference between the first two column means, to form conclusions which range beyond those specified for type two items would be dangerous, but it is possible that while some of the behavior in question is good, too much or too little of it has deleterious results. Moderation might be the key.

Item 6 (makes suggestions for office procedures) constitutes a fourth variation in association which is a nearly perfect mirror image of the last variable. A significant difference appears between the highly productive column mean and the other two response categories and the sequence of means (3.92, 5.64, and 5.63 respectively) is once more slightly curvilinear but the numerical difference between the latter two averages is minute and probably meaningless.

Regarding this variable, all that can be said with confidence is that the behavior must be present if good interview impressions are desired and that if the behavior is not strong, quality ratings will be confined to one of the inferior points on the scale. It should be recalled that 6 was one of three items receiving a marginal importance rating. On the basis of this rating, one might have hypothesized that the means would decrease across the columns; individuals acting out nonessential behaviors should be penalized. This expectation was not confirmed and subordinates who perform the behavior not at all risk low interview evaluations. A degree of conformance to the statement is required if highly productive judgments are to result.

Characterizing the fifth form of relationship is item 10 (cooperates in scheduling the interview) which behaves like 6 in that there is a low, high, medium mean configuration as we move from one column to the next. However, item 10 witnesses a significant difference only between the highly and moderately productive means and the slightly productive column does not statistically differ from either of the top two categories. This tendency is the source of some confusion. Based on the difference between the first two column means, one might be tempted to conclude that when a statement closely corresponds to the subordinate's behavior the rating of the interview will be highly productive and that when the statement becomes less typical the rating will be moderately

productive. This stipulation would be misleading because the LSD test indicates that the accuracy score for interviews rated slightly productive is technically equal to the accuracy scores for the other two groups. Since this is the case, predictions are impossible. In actuality, the performance of the behavior resulted in highly productive evaluations for some interviewees and slightly productive evaluations for others. Likewise, medium amounts of the behavior yielded both moderately and slightly productive judgments. Had the difference between the slightly productive mean and the highly and moderately productive means been real rather than artificial this situation would have been less complex and it could have been argued that the representative would be wise to exemplify the behavior completely or not at all for the least positive assessments stem from modest amounts of the behavior.

A sixth and final collection of homogenous variables contains items 4 (asks questions), 8 (preorganizes materials), 13 (speaks openly and candidly), and 20 (works to be a success). For each item there is an upward progression of averages but only the first and third column means differ significantly. The middle column mean is close enough to the end point means that it cannot be regarded as distinct from either. This implies that subordinates who got a highly productive rating more conscientiously performed the behavior than those receiving a slightly productive rating and that among those individuals given a moderately productive

rating were some who typified the behavior and some who did not.

Yet to be analyzed are those items which failed to exhibit significant F ratios. Only six variables (1, 2, 16, 17, 25, and 29) fall under this heading. A nonsignificant F indicates that none of the three means differ significantly from one another. For items 1 (covers an appropriate amount of material), 2 (sticks to the subject), 17 (prepares account materials), and 29 (properly allocated time for the interview), this finding is curious given that these variables were viewed by managers as reasonably important (see Table 1) and given that the raw accuracy scores show some variability (see Table 3). Based on these two facts one might think that the relative presence or absence of the behavior would influence quality ratings. That is, managers, since they believe the behavior to be important, should be predisposed to give high evaluations when they observe a sufficient amount of the behavior and low evaluations when they see less of it. This did not happen and examination of these behaviors apparently does not allow one to discriminate between productive and unproductive interviews. The level of performance is no different despite sessions of divergent quality.

The situation is equally puzzling for variables 16 (prepares new objectives) and 25 (wants to discuss salary). Items 16 and 25, like item 6 (makes suggestions for office procedures) which was discussed previously, showed themselves to be relatively unimportant behaviors (see Table 1). This

finding does not reduce the anticipation of significant F ratios, it just reverses the direction of the expected relationships. When a less-than-important behavior is in evidence, reason dictates that the interview evaluation should go down rather than up. Such was not the case, and, even though there was considerable accuracy score spread (see Table 3), managers did not give lower interview ratings to those who performed somewhat extraneous behaviors. In fact, if the lack of a significant F is momentarily ignored, that data seems to support the opposite conclusion. When the subordinate does not strenuously engage in the behavior he/she is apt to get a worse overall rating. In other words, the behaviors are not crucial ones but interviewees had better perform them anyway.

Had the F's been significant, 1 (covers an appropriate amount of material), 2 (sticks to the subject), 16 (prepares new objectives), and 17 (prepares account materials) would have been discussed as some form of a type three relationship in that the behavior is most noticeable in moderately productive interviews. Item 25 (wants to discuss salary), with its low, high, medium mean conformation, best fits with case four or five while variable 29 (properly allocated time for the interview) is strictly upwardly linear and would have been placed under a type one, two, or six pattern.

Summary

In the preceding section, the results of this study were described in a cumbersome fashion. Here, findings will be

transposed into a more readable and usable form. In the list below, the number in parentheses following the item corresponds to the original item number in the tables and in the results section.

Based on the opinions of managers, performance appraisal interviews are more likely to be productive when subordinates:

1. Request help in handling problems (3).
2. Ask questions when something is not understood (4).
3. Freely take responsibility for failing to meet objectives (5).
4. Make suggestions aimed at improving office procedures (6).
5. Strive to prevent outside distractions of the session (7).
6. Have materials well organized (8).
7. Express an interest in the welfare of the company (9).
8. Receive criticism without being defensive (12).
9. Speak openly and candidly (13).
10. Put forth a positive attitude about sales ability (14).
11. Play an active role in the interview and do a good share of the talking (15).
12. Willingly discuss problems and solutions to problems (18).
13. Provide all information the manager desires on

all topics (19).

14. Conscientiously work to be a success (20).

15. Accept suggestions (21).

16. Self-analyze problems and try to determine ways in which objectives can be achieved (22).

17. Discuss specific account problems (23).

18. Relax and appear at ease (24).

19. Accept company policy (26).

20. Refrain from immature conduct (27).

21. Seem willing to develop new sales possibilities (28).

Judgments of interview quality were unaffected by the presence or absence of other behaviors. Nevertheless, several additional behaviors were regarded by managers as important. As a result, even though ratings of the discussion may be unchanged when these actions are observed, representatives will probably not be faulted if they:

1. Limit the amount of material to be covered (1).

2. Stick to the subject (2).

3. Cooperate in setting a time for the interview (10).

4. Bring complete and accurate account books, statistics, and sales analyses to the interview (17).

5. Set aside an appropriate amount of time for the interview (28).

Only two behaviors were found to be both unassociated with profitable assessment sessions and unimportant in comparison with other items. These behaviors, coming to the

interview with a prepared list of new objectives (16) and seeming anxious to discuss salary (25), would, as a consequence, not be recommended to subordinates.

Conclusion

The role of the interviewee in performance appraisal interviews has, heretofore, been a more or less ignored topic for research. This study fills a gap in the literature and it highlights, perhaps for the first time, the need for interviewees to exude a mature, positive, and hopeful attitude during evaluation. Subordinates must, no matter how bleak the outlook, remain confident in their ability to do the job and they should express a genuine desire to learn and improve. In addition, it was found that employees need to actively seek to utilize one of their most important job resources: the experience and knowledge of their supervisor; the superior should be probed for suggestions concerning the handling of difficult problems. Further, workers ought to maintain and convey an interest in the company and should, via the development of new policy ideas, strive to maximize the good of the organization.

The guidelines presented in this paper were developed for sales representatives and interviewees employed in other kinds of jobs may not find all the suggested behaviors applicable. However, many of the recommendations may be generalized or tailored to fit unique circumstances. If an attempt is made to modify and apply the guidelines, subordinates, regardless of their vocation, ought to be able

to contribute more to assessment sessions and the sessions, as a result, should be more productive and beneficial.

References

Crawford, H. E. A Descriptive Analysis of the Employee Appraisal Interview in an Industrial Organization (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1974). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1974, 35, 1266A. (University Microfilms No. 74-17, 237)

Flanagan, J. C. Job Requirements. In Current Trends in Industrial Psychology. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1949. (a)

Flanagan, J. C. A New Approach to Evaluating Personnel. Personnel, 1949, 26, 35-42. (b)

Flanagan, J. C. Defining the Requirements of the Executive's Job. Personnel, 1951, 28, 28-35.

Flanagan, J. C. The Critical Incident Technique. Psychological Bulletin, 1954, 51, 327-358.

Flanagan, J. C., & Burns, R. K. The Employee Performance Record: A New Appraisal and Development Tool. Harvard Business Review, 1955, 33 (5), 95-102.

Greller, M. M. Subordinate Participation and Reactions to the Appraisal Interview. Journal of Applied Psychology, 1975, 60, 544-549.

Kim, J., & Kohout, F. J. Analysis of Variance and Covariance: Subprograms ANOVA and Oneway. In N. H. Nie, C. H. Hull, J. G. Jenkins, K. Steinbrenner, & D. H. Bent (Eds.), Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

Stano, M. The Critical Incident Technique: A Review of the Method. Paper submitted to the Central States Speech Association Convention, 1983.

Table 1

Branch Sales Managers' Ratings of Item Importance

		Ratings								
		Important						Unimportant		
Item	n[a]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1	90	19	45	18	8	0	0	0	2.17	.86
2	92	26	48	13	3	2	0	0	1.99	.87
3	96	47	25	14	9	1	0	0	1.88	1.05
4	96	54	30	8	3	0	0	0	1.64	.95
5	96	46	38	10	1	0	0	0	1.70	.90
6	96	12	19	14	19	20	5	7	3.62	1.74
7	96	39	40	12	5	0	0	0	1.82	.85
8	96	54	30	10	2	0	0	0	1.58	.76
9	96	49	29	12	6	0	0	0	1.74	.91
10	96	50	23	14	8	1	1	0	1.82	1.04
11	96	66	26	4	0	0	0	0	1.35	.56
12	95	53	32	8	2	0	0	0	1.57	.74
13	96	69	22	5	0	0	0	0	1.33	.57
14	96	62	29	4	1	0	0	0	1.42	.63
15	96	51	35	8	1	0	0	1	1.63	.89
16	89	29	17	18	12	4	1	8	2.78	1.83
17	89	46	27	11	4	1	0	0	1.73	.93
18	96	64	26	5	1	0	0	0	1.41	.64
19	96	64	21	11	0	0	0	0	1.45	.69
20	96	71	22	3	0	0	0	0	1.29	.52
21	96	59	32	3	1	0	1	0	1.48	.77
22	96	47	38	7	3	0	0	1	1.70	.93
23	95	53	26	6	5	4	1	0	1.78	1.16
24	95	46	36	10	2	0	0	1	1.72	.93
25	95	27	19	8	35	3	3	0	2.76	1.44
26	93	23	40	15	13	2	0	0	2.26	1.05
27	95	53	34	7	1	0	0	0	1.54	.68
28	95	62	29	3	1	0	0	0	1.40	.61
29	94	57	21	10	6	0	0	0	1.63	.92

[a]The n in some cases varies due to omitted questions on an otherwise complete form.

Table 2

Branch Sales Managers' Ratings of Interview Productivity

Ratings							
Productive					Unproductive		
1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
26	36	29	2	1	0	2.11	.87

Note: n = 94 (while 96 forms were returned, 2 managers did not respond to this question).

Table 3

Branch Sales Managers' Ratings of Item Accuracy

Item	n[a]	Ratings: Accurate 1	2	3	4	Inaccurate 5	6	7	M	SD
1	96	38	28	16	5	3	0	6	2.28	1.60
2	96	26	27	19	11	7	2	4	2.67	1.59
3	96	22	25	21	10	10	2	6	2.91	1.71
4	96	27	34	15	9	2	5	4	2.54	1.62
5	96	34	21	26	5	6	4	0	2.38	1.39
6	96	6	6	7	15	13	14	35	5.14	1.91
7	96	41	30	17	3	2	1	2	2.02	1.27
8	96	36	26	7	17	5	3	2	2.44	1.58
9	96	35	29	15	14	2	0	1	2.20	1.24
10	96	68	17	5	5	1	0	0	1.48	.89
11	96	35	30	21	6	4	0	0	2.10	1.10
12	96	34	30	18	5	5	1	3	2.29	1.45
13	96	45	31	13	5	1	0	1	1.85	1.08
14	96	50	26	11	9	0	0	0	1.78	.99
15	96	38	34	14	7	3	0	0	1.99	1.06
16	96	9	10	8	27	9	10	23	4.45	1.96
17	96	33	25	9	14	5	2	8	2.70	1.86
18	96	41	30	14	7	4	0	0	1.99	1.12
19	96	58	23	13	1	0	1	0	1.59	.89
20	96	48	25	15	6	1	0	1	1.87	1.12
21	96	52	26	16	0	1	1	0	1.70	.94
22	96	9	19	31	22	9	4	2	3.24	1.36
23	95	38	32	11	5	4	2	3	2.19	1.49
24	95	41	29	9	8	6	1	1	2.12	1.37
25	95	17	9	10	20	9	6	24	4.15	2.18
26	95	21	27	22	16	4	3	2	2.71	1.44
27	95	46	23	17	7	2	0	0	1.91	1.07
28	95	58	26	10	6	2	0	0	1.76	1.02
29	95	63	23	3	5	0	0	1	1.53	.98

[a]The n in each case varies owing to omitted questions on an otherwise complete form.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance for Branch Sales Managers' Questionnaires

Item[a]	Column Means[b] 1	2	3	F Ratio	F Probability[c]
1	2.58	1.86	2.56	2.20	.117
2	2.50	2.31	3.22	3.06	.052
3	2.04x	2.67y	3.88xy	10.48	.000
4	1.92x	2.69	2.94x	3.13	.049
5	1.88x	2.19y	2.97xy	5.15	.008
6	3.92xy	5.64x	5.63y	8.69	.000
7	1.46x	1.83y	2.66xy	7.77	.001
8	1.92x	2.33	3.03x	3.92	.023
9	1.54x	2.11y	2.81xy	8.91	.000
10	1.12x	1.72x	1.53	3.68	.029
11	1.42x	2.08xy	2.66xy	10.76	.000
12	1.58x	2.08y	3.13xy	10.37	.000
13	1.42x	1.83	2.22x	4.19	.018
14	1.27x	1.69y	2.28xy	9.13	.000
15	1.46x	1.86y	2.56xy	9.64	.000
16	4.50	4.28	4.66	.311	.734
17	2.77	2.44	3.03	.845	.433
18	1.54x	1.78y	2.59xy	8.42	.000
19	1.19x	1.50y	2.03xy	7.56	.001
20	1.42x	1.81	2.25x	4.18	.018
21	1.15x	1.67xy	2.09xy	8.47	.000
22	2.62x	3.17y	3.88xy	7.01	.001
23	1.58x	2.03y	2.90xy	6.55	.002
24	1.31x	2.11xy	2.81xy	10.07	.000
25	3.42	4.69	4.23	2.68	.074
26	2.31x	2.14y	3.68xy	13.61	.000
27	1.31x	1.74y	2.56xy	13.17	.000
28	1.35x	1.69y	2.19xy	5.47	.006
29	1.42	1.51	1.66	.41	.663

[a]On item 1 through 22, df = 2, 91. On item 23 through 29, df = 2, 90.

[b]Column means followed by a common letter differ significantly at the .05 level based on an LSD test.

[c]The null hypothesis was rejected when $p \leq .05$.